

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 007498

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

Wednesday, December 21, 2005

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Iraqi Sunnis Reject Election Results - Hurriyet
Debate Continues on Folklore Costumes - Hurriyet
Freedom House Report: Turkey is the only 'Partly-Free'
Country in Europe - Sabah
PKK Crisis in NATO - Milliyet
Defense Minister Gonul: We Cannot Launch Cross Border
Operations - Milliyet
TUSIAD Criticizes the Government - Aksam
Al-Qaeda Members Istanbul Bombing Trial Begins - Vatan
Businessmen Do Not Want Early Elections - Turkiye
The Big Bosses Stand Against Early Elections - Zaman

OPINION MAKERS

President and TUSIAD Urged Government to Drop Election
Threshold - Radikal
Ian Lesser: "Turkey-US Relation's Main Agenda is Iran" -
Cumhuriyet
Sezer Issues First Warning about the Economy - Yeni Safak
Military's Warnings Ignored Regarding the Sale of Land to
Foreigners - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Turkish Businessmen Say No to Early Election, Yes to Penal
Code Reform: All papers extensively covered the remarks
from Turkish business leaders against holding early
elections despite the opposition party's desire for them.
During a meeting of the Turkish Industrialist and
Businessmen Association (TUSIAD) in Ankara, featuring
President Sezer as the honored guest, businessmen Koc and
Sabanci delivered sharp messages about the need to lower the
election threshold and called for more efforts to eliminate
parts of the penal code which might be obstacles to freedom
of expression. Omer Sabanci, president of TUSIAD, noted the
lack of determination toward implementing these reforms. He
also stressed the need for political responsibility to deal
with law suits such as those filed against writer Orhan
Pamuk, journalist Hrant Dink and others. Papers noted that
President Sezer was especially supportive of the need to
lower the election threshold.

Papers also observed that instead of holding talks with the
TUSIAD board, Prime Minister Erdogan received members of the
"Independent Industrialist and Businessmen Association"
(MUSIAD), a group of businessmen with strong Islamist
leanings.

Danish Ambassadors Call for Rasmussen to be Sensitive on
Islam: "Zaman" carried a front-page story highlighting a
joint declaration from 22 former Danish Ambassadors
criticizing Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen for supporting
cartoons insulting the Muslim prophet Mohammad. The
ambassadors have stressed that freedom cannot be abused to
fight the beliefs of minorities. Carrying excerpts from the
Danish daily "Politiken" which published the declaration,
"Zaman" also noted that Ambassador Hans Henrik Bruun,
Danish Ambassador to Turkey in 1987, was among the signers.

Back to July 2003 Suleymaniye: "Hurriyet" daily front-paged
an interview with British national Michael Todd who was
taken into custody along with Turkish special forces during
an operation by US forces in Suleymaniye, northern Iraq, in
2003. Recounting his memories, Todd gave some details on
who interrogated them and how they were treated. He also
gave a copy of his "Evidence/Property Custody Document"
report to "Hurriyet". Furthermore, a "Hurriyet" columnist
Yalcin Dogan commented that the Suleymaniye incident was a
vindictive response by the Pentagon and the US to the

Turkish parliament's March 1, 2003, refusal to allow American troops through Turkey in support of the war in Iraq.

EDITORIAL OPINION: US-Turkish Relations; NATO

"The US' New Agenda for Turkey"

Sami Kohen commented in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (12/21): "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described the US-Turkey relationship as 'a very important strategic partnership' at the swearing-in ceremony for Ambassador Wilson. This characterization indicates the renewed importance the Bush Administration is placing on Turkey two-and-a-half years after the March 1 crisis. An experienced diplomat, Ambassador Wilson has assumed his duties with this new understanding. As the Ambassador stressed at a lunch with business leaders in Istanbul earlier this week, the problems of the 21st century necessitate a modernization of the US-Turkey relationship. It is not good enough 'just to have good relations,' he said. 'The relationship must also produce results.' What is the way to achieve these results? First of all, by trying to resolve those problems that have had negative affects on the relationship by working together. The new agenda, in summary, is as follows: increasing bilateral high-level visits and dialogue; establishing cooperation on Iraq's political future and the PKK presence there; continued cooperation and exchanges of views on Syria and Iran; continued support for Turkey's EU process; support for efforts to resolve the Cyprus issue; helping Turkey to implement economic and political reforms. In short, it seems that Ambassador Wilson is determined to set the US-Turkey relationship on a more realistic and pragmatic footing. If there is going to be a strategic partnership between the US and Turkey, the problems which have bedeviled that relationship so far must be turned into new areas of cooperation."

"NATO's New Mission"

Kamuran Ozbir wrote in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (12/21): "I would like to highlight NATO Secretary General Scheffer's remarks that 'NATO is not a police force for the world. But if any of its member countries believe it is necessary, or if any foreign country asks for NATO support, then we have to act.' I believe that in the 21st century NATO must undertake new roles and missions. At the moment, NATO is in search of a new identity. NATO's duties have increased when compared with the cold war era, because the kinds of threats faced by the alliance have changed since then. Problems are no longer only military, but have economic, political, and social dimensions as well. NATO continues its out-of-area operations, from the Balkans to Afghanistan, from Sudan to Pakistan. Scheffer stressed during his visit to Turkey that the real goal of NATO remains the common security of its member states. But this basic concept can be modified from time to time due to new threats, such as terrorism, that may arise in countries far away. Sometimes NATO has intervened to address these threats (as in Afghanistan), and other times it has not (as in Iraq). NATO currently has 26 members, but if we count NATO partner countries this number climbs to 53. Is it necessary and desirable to expand the alliance to this extent? This will be the most hotly debated issue at the NATO summit in 2008." WILSON